

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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BROOKLYN BRIDGE ALLIANCE FOR YOUTH (BBAY) RECEIVES FEDERAL FUNDING TO REIMAGINE BLACK YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

Brooklyn Center, MN – The Brooklyn Bridge Alliance for Youth (BBAY) is pleased to report it has received a grant for a new initiative through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services - Office of Minority Health to promote Black youth mental health (BYMH).

This award is one of only eight national awards, which BBAY received after BBAY partners, and the Minnesota Department of Health worked together to apply for the federal grant.

The relentless traumatic harm caused to Black youth continues to present as a consistent trigger and mental health stressor. The reoccurring experiences have caused embedded moral and psychic traumas to Black youth. The unprecedented rate of youth mental health concerns and suicide are alarming statistics (Surgeon General, 2021). In an effort for Black youth to reach their maximum mental health and well-being, we must shift from centering illness to community policies and practices that will have crossover impacts on mental health (RWJ, 2014).

The Reimagine Black Youth Mental Health initiative will change systems to improve youth mental health by implementing a youth-centered and community-driven process to identify, analyze, implement, and evaluate specific policy changes in a range of settings.

The BBAY will use funds in the 1st year to:

- Reimagine the mental health and well-being of youth across the diverse Black and African diaspora in the Brooklyns and throughout northwest Hennepin County to expand the ecosystem of mental health supports that meet young people where they are,
- Establish a community advisory centering the diverse Black diaspora to advise with initiatives,
- Mobilize at least 600 Black youth to identify policies that promote their mental health and well-being,
- Activate community and governments to take policy action based on evidence of success, and
- Collaborate with MDH to better connect state resources to our community, and to amplify youth-centered approaches to mental health.

This is just the start. BBAY partners have committed to leveraging additional investments to expand this project. Partners include: the cities of Brooklyn Park and Brooklyn Center, Anoka-Hennepin Schools,

Brooklyn Center Community Schools, Hennepin County, Hennepin Technical College, North Hennepin Community College, Osseo Area Schools, Robbinsdale Area Schools, ACER and One2One Mentoring.

As part of the grant, MDH was also awarded federal funds that will be used for partnering with the local community to research and implement effective public health policies for improving youth mental health. MDH will engage partners across the state enterprise to support efforts throughout the project and identify opportunities to scale and sustain effective policies identified through this project.

For information go to www.Brooklynsallianceforyouth.org

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